



Enclosure 2a
April 23, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
March 5, 2019

COUNCIL ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chair McConaghy welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. He noted for the record that Council Member Davis would not be joining the meeting, declared a quorum present, and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: *Amy Beretta, **Christopher Bove, Colleen Callahan, *Barbara Cottam, *Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Daniel McConaghy, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

Absent: Karen Davis

[*Arrived at 5:35 p.m.]

[**Ex-officio, non-voting member]

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the agenda for the March 5, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 5 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Jo Eva Gaines, Daniel McConaghy, Marta Martinez, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0

[Members Beretta, Cottam and Field arrived after the approval of the agenda]

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the February 4, 2019, Meeting

On a motion duly made by Colleen Callahan and seconded by Jo Eva Gaines, it was

VOTED: That the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education accepts the minutes of the February 4, 2019, Meeting

Vote: 3 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Colleen Callahan, Jo Eva Gaines, and Marta Martinez

NAYS: 0

[Chair McConaghy and Member Purtill had to recuse from the vote as they did not attend the February 4, 2019, Meeting]

[Members Beretta, Cottam and Field arrived after the approval of the minutes]

3. OPEN FORUM

Chair McConaghy reported that no one had signed up to speak.

4. REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Wagner began his report by announcing that as part of Governor Raimondo's proposal on Universal Pre-K expansion initiative, this week RIDE released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for qualified providers to increase access to the RI State Pre-K Program. Final proposals are due on March 28, and programs will be selected and announced in late April.

Next, Commissioner Wagner addressed the public and media attention that the Times2 STEM Academy has received since the Council's approval of their charter renewal a few meetings ago. He reminded Council Members that the limited three-year term renewal included very strong conditions, ranging from programmatic, to governance and leadership issues. While RIDE has tried to be fair to the school and the Providence School Department by letting the local processes play out, the department is monitoring the situation very closely to ensure that students continue to receive the best education, while the adults work out the issues.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Curriculum Survey – Update

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic by giving some historic context. He shared that today's curriculum conversation is a key part of a comprehensive strategy on the state of where local districts are in terms of curriculum, as well as some efforts that RIDE has been working on for the past couple of years to bring that state to a better place.

He shared that RIDE had attempted to do this work in the past and had been told to back-off because curriculum is a local purview. However, things have changed recently, and he attributes it in part to RIDE lowering the temperature on things that were generating more heat than actual impact, as well as a broader national context where in the past there had not been a clear set of standards against in which to evaluate the quality of curriculum. This combination of factors, has changed the discussion. He called out John Simmons, Executive Director of RIPEC, a key partner in this work who just put out a comprehensive report, which in part addresses the issue of curriculum as well as some broader issues, specifically looking at how Massachusetts had to deal with this kind of work.

Prior to jumping into the heart of the conversation on where the districts are in terms of curriculum, Lisa Foehr, RIDE's Chief of Teaching and Learning, gave some context and background on the difference between standards - the overarching set of guidelines -; frameworks - explanation of the standards with classroom observation walkthrough tools and student work samples aligned to standards -; and curriculum - full set of instructional materials, strategies, units and lessons that provide the instruction, based on the standards.

Ms. Foehr shared that this has been a cross-office effort by staff in the three offices that make-up RIDE's Division of Teaching and Learning. With the belief that a high-quality curriculum matters and is the foundation of an equitable academic program that includes goals, instructional practices, assessments, differentiation, and intervention plans, RIDE held a series of Honors Program meetings for district teams who engaged with invited guest speakers from around the country.

Ms. Foehr went over a PowerPoint presentation on why curriculum and professional learning matter; the continuum of implementation; national research data on the amount of time the average student spends on assignments that are not of high quality; resources being spent; and the strategies that are underway in school year 2018-2019. She also shared data and answered questions on the current status of curriculum materials and related professional learning in the areas of mathematics and reading thought-out the State. RIDE is currently working with the organization, EdReports, in supporting fourteen school districts through a selection process that starts with an academic vision, in figuring out which curriculum might be the best fit for their district.

b. Universal Pre-K- Overview

Kevin Gallagher, Governor's Senior Deputy Chief of Staff, gave a high-level preview of the Governor's proposal to expand state-sponsored Pre-K education in Rhode Island.

He shared that this proposal is a multi-agency effort in collaboration with the Governor's office and external partners. He extended an invitation to all Council Members who would like to express their support either in person or in writing at the first of many legislative hearings on the proposal being held the next day.

He emphasized that the Governor's goal is to achieve universal Pre-K before she leaves office, which in the Governor's mind, is a legacy initiative for her. He noted that the Governor feels very fortunate that she was able to send her children to high-quality early education programs, and would like the same afforded to other families, regardless of their ability to pay. He stressed that universal Pre-K programs will not be compulsory, and that families are free to choose other options. Rhode Island already has around 1,080 seats that are high-quality and that meet the nation's high-quality standards, so the target is to create around 7,000 seats over the next few years, about 70% of the state's population of 4-year olds, at the same high-level of quality. High-quality Pre-K programs will be a mixed delivery system, which means having state Pre-K programs in any public school, Head Start Centers, as well as Early Childhood Centers, to leverage all of the work that is happening across the state. This will also give families more flexibility of options to choose what is most convenient to them. The state's goal is to continue to use its high-benchmark for high-quality programs, while enhancing, and not jeopardizing, the quality of the birth-5 system.

Mr. Gallagher stressed that a high-quality Pre-K system is the greatest predictor of gains in 3rd grade reading proficiency; has lasting effects with persistent boosts in socio-emotional skills and later-effects; is most advantageous to those most in need (ELLs, children with disabilities, and children in poverty); and from a state-level investment, investing early, means saving later on.

Council Members asked whether these high-quality Pre-K programs will be available only to the urban communities, to which Mr. Gallagher answered that the current 1,080 seats are concentrated in 11 high-priority communities that serve high-needs students. However, the state's ultimate goal is to have high-quality Pre-K programs across every city and town, granted that the facilities meet all of the required benchmarks. Monies will be distributed through a competitive RFP process, contingent upon funding.

In closing, Mr. Gallagher thanked the RIDE staff for all of their ongoing guidance and assistance in preparing the proposal. He also asked, on behalf of the Governor, that Council Members help spread the word and communicate their support of the proposal to help get it over the finish line.

c. Proposed Revisions to the CECE Regulations for the Purpose of Public Review and Comment

Commissioner Wagner introduced the topic by stating that this is the first read of the proposed changes to the Regulations on Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Programs, which RIDE believes is the minimum necessary to advance the first phase of the Governor's Universal Pre-K Program being launched this summer. As the Pre-K program expands, there will be other phases of changes to the regulations over the next few years.

Dr. Phyllis Lynch, Director of RIDE's Office of Instruction, Assessment and Curriculum, gave an overview of the proposed changes. She highlighted changes to the following sections:

- Purpose and applicability (to address requirements in RI General Laws);
- Approval process (update language to address two-tier process);
- Structural standards for school and agencies (pertaining to tier-two programs);
- Early learning teaching and learning standards (adjust language regarding content standards to be more generic, allowing for future changes); and
- Some editorial changes to clarify language, as well as some technical adjustments to ensure alignment with state law and/or other regulations.

6. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

On a motion duly made by Jo Eva Gaines and seconded by Colleen Callahan, it was

VOTED: That the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education adjourns.

Vote: 8 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative as follows:

YEAS: Amy Beretta, Colleen Callahan, Barbara Cottam, Gara Field, Jo Eva Gaines, Marta Martinez, Daniel McConaghy, and Lawrence Purtill

NAYS: 0